



*Newsletter of the Biometrics
Working Group, The Wildlife Society
Edited by Terry Shaffer
Volume 9, Number 1*

January 2004

Message from the Chair

Grey Pendleton

I'd like to start off by thanking last year's BWG officers and the organizers of sponsored symposia for their efforts in organizing events at The Wildlife Society annual meeting in Burlington, Vermont this past September. Organizers and presenters do most of the work and the 'Working Group' gets to steal a little of the credit. Past chair Duane Diefenbach was invited to address the officers of TWS, the Sections and Chapters, and Working Groups because BWG is considered to be one of the most active and successful of the Working Groups. This reputation within TWS is in large part because session organizers who are members of BWG, and the presenters they recruit, have consistently provided high quality opportunities for training and information sharing, both within BWG and to the larger TWS audience. The symposia at the Burlington meeting are excellent examples of this. Some organizers also have gone 'beyond the call of duty' and arranged for publication of symposia or workshop proceedings in journals or as books. Again, the organizers do the work and it's nice if BWG can 'bask in the glow' just a bit.

This leads me to the main point of this note – how can BWG be of further service to its

membership and the larger TWS audience? The BWG charter lists 8 objectives. (I'll paraphrase but look at the full text on our web page.)

1. Provide a forum for members to discuss quantitative issues in natural resource management.
2. Provide mechanisms to aid biometricians in understanding new developments.
3. Sponsor training workshops, symposia, and 'other means' on quantitative topics for non-specialists.
4. Provide independent reviewers to comment on statistical aspects of resource management.
5. Provide independent reviewers to evaluate models used in natural resource management.
6. Sponsor development of rapid communication exchange to benefit biometrics practitioners.
7. Promote strong biometrics curricula in academic wildlife programs.
8. Develop technical reviews, position statements, etc. on biometrical aspects of wildlife management and research.

BWG-sponsored workshops and symposia at TWS annual meetings have been the principal means used to achieve objectives 1 – 3. Lesser efforts have gone into addressing other objectives. Some activities, such as providing reviewers, have been limited because of the decision of the BWG membership a few years ago to do this only at the request of TWS Council. In a survey of former BWG members several years ago, one of the main reasons for discontinuing BWG membership was that BWG didn't provide a useful service to them. I think most of us who have attended BWG-sponsored events at the annual meeting have found them of great value. But not all members are able to attend the annual meeting, where our major efforts have been focused. Publication of presentations from BWG-sponsored workshops and symposia is of great value in spreading the information more widely, but because of the tremendous amount of work involved, we can't expect all organizers to do this. In an endorsed proposal for a workshop to be held at the 2004 TWS meeting (Calgary, AB), Mike Conroy, Chris Fonnesebeck, and James Peterson have included a component to be done via the internet prior to the annual meeting. This is extra effort on their part but I think it is a good direction to go to provide more wide-reaching opportunities. So, I would like to ask the members of BWG to provide suggestions about how we can better achieve all of our stated objectives and provide services to BWG and TWS members who are not able to attend TWS annual meetings. Please send your suggestions to me or any other BWG officer. We'll summarize your responses, try to implement them if possible, and report back in the next newsletter.

One closing thought. In the last BWG election, we had a hard time recruiting candidates. Please start thinking about

accepting a nomination for BWG office. Most of the work BWG gets 'credit' for is done by members in capacities other than as officers. The officers are largely just the 'grease' that moves things along. The officers' roles are important, but not too time consuming so I'd urge you to consider running for office.

Plan to Attend TWS 2004

Mark your calendars now for the 2004 Annual Conference in Calgary, Alberta. The conference will be held **18-22 September 2004**. See the following for additional information:

http://www.wildlife.org/conference/2004_conference_ad.pdf

http://www.wildlife.org/conference/2004_preliminary_program.pdf

Upcoming Deadline for TWS 2004

Abstracts for contributed papers and posters for the annual TWS meeting in Calgary, Alberta must be submitted (electronically) to the TWS Program Committee by **16 February 2004**. We encourage Working Group members to submit papers to share your current work with your colleagues; we all benefit from sharing our expertise. The call for papers and posters can be found at:

<http://www.wildlife.org/conference/index.cfm?name=2004cfp>

Biometrics Working Group Student Travel Grants

The Biometrics Working Group of the Wildlife Society is offering two student travel grants (\$250 each) for TWS student

members presenting papers or posters at the annual Wildlife Society Meeting. The purpose of the travel grants is to promote student interest in biometrics. Applicants must be students and members of the Wildlife Society. Preference will be given to applicants who demonstrate strong statistical or mathematical skills. To be considered, submit 1) a request for award (1 page maximum) that documents your interest in the application of statistics or mathematics to wildlife/ecological research, 2) a letter of support from a mentor or supervisor, and 3) an abstract of paper or poster to be presented following guidelines in the Call for Contributed Papers and Posters. The deadline for submission of travel grants is **1 June 2004**.

For more information contact:

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Minutes of the 2003 Annual BWG Business Meeting (7 September, Burlington VT)

Dave Otis

2002 Minutes: C. Ribic moved and M. Conroy seconded a motion to accept the Secretary's minutes of the 2002 meeting. The motion passed.

Treasurer's Report: J. Yee reported that the current balance is \$9,091.98. B. Clark moved and G. Pendleton seconded a motion to approve the report. The motion passed.

Election Report: Chair-elect, Terry Shaffer; Secretary, Josh Millspaugh; Treasurer, Glen

Sargeant; Board members, Mary Conner, Mike Conroy, Bill Gould, Bill Thompson

Internet Voting: D. Diefenbach reported that the new Internet voting system worked well and that our promised contribution to the TWS Internet system should be paid.

Workshop/Symposium Policy: B. Clark reviewed the draft policy statement that appeared in the July 2003 newsletter and summarized the discussion from the prior Executive Committee meeting. Discussion ensued about the idea of imposing a \$1,000 contribution limit per event, and to limit the total contribution in any given year to 25% of the current treasury balance. M. Conroy questioned if this policy was too conservative, and G. Pendleton noted that our balance was currently above average due to recent profit from workshops and low commitments for student travel grants, but this situation might not last into the future. D. Otis and B. Clark agreed to draft final policy for Executive Board approval.

2004 Workshop/Symposium Proposals:

The membership discussed the workshop proposals on capture-recapture (McDonald and Manly), modeling of correlated data (Christman), and MCMC/Winbugs/random effects (Conroy and Fonnesebeck), and the symposium proposal on collaboration in large-scale studies (Diefenbach and McDonald). There was considerable discussion about optimum strategies, e.g., how many of each to propose to TWS, offering different kinds of workshops to attract biometricians versus biologists, appropriate length (1/2 day versus full day). K. Pollock moved to support the Conroy/Fonnesebeck proposal as a full day workshop. B. Thompson seconded. Motion passed. The group consensus on the Christman proposal was that it needed to be a full day rather than 1/2 day workshop.

Regarding the McDonald/Manly proposal, the concern was that it did not mention inclusion of hands-on computing with contemporary software, e.g., MARK. D. Otis moved to endorse the McDonald/Manly and Christman workshops, subject to some revision by the organizers. Motion failed. K. Pollock moved to defer the McDonald/Manly workshop until 2005 and to support the Christman proposal as a full day workshop. B. Clark seconded. S. Sheriff offered an amendment to postpone the Conroy/Fonnesbeck workshop until 2005. K. Williams seconded. Amendment failed. The original Pollock motion passed. M. Conroy moved to encourage McDonald/Manly to recast their workshop as a symposium. W. Thogmartin seconded. Motion passed. K. Pollock moved to support the Diefenbach/McDonald symposium proposal. K. Williams seconded. The motion passed.

Signing up for the BWG Listserve

Go to <http://rana.er.usgs.gov>

Then select "**Monitoring Program Lists**", "**stat_tws**", "**join stat_tws**"

Alternatively one can go directly to

http://rana.er.usgs.gov/scripts/lyris.pl?enter=stat_tws&text_mode=<english

and select "**join stat_tws**"

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